



No. 6
JULY 84
\$1.50 US
\$2.00 CAN
70p UK

WORLDS 5 COLLIDE™

APPROVED
BY THE
COMICS
CODE
AUTHORITY



STEEL

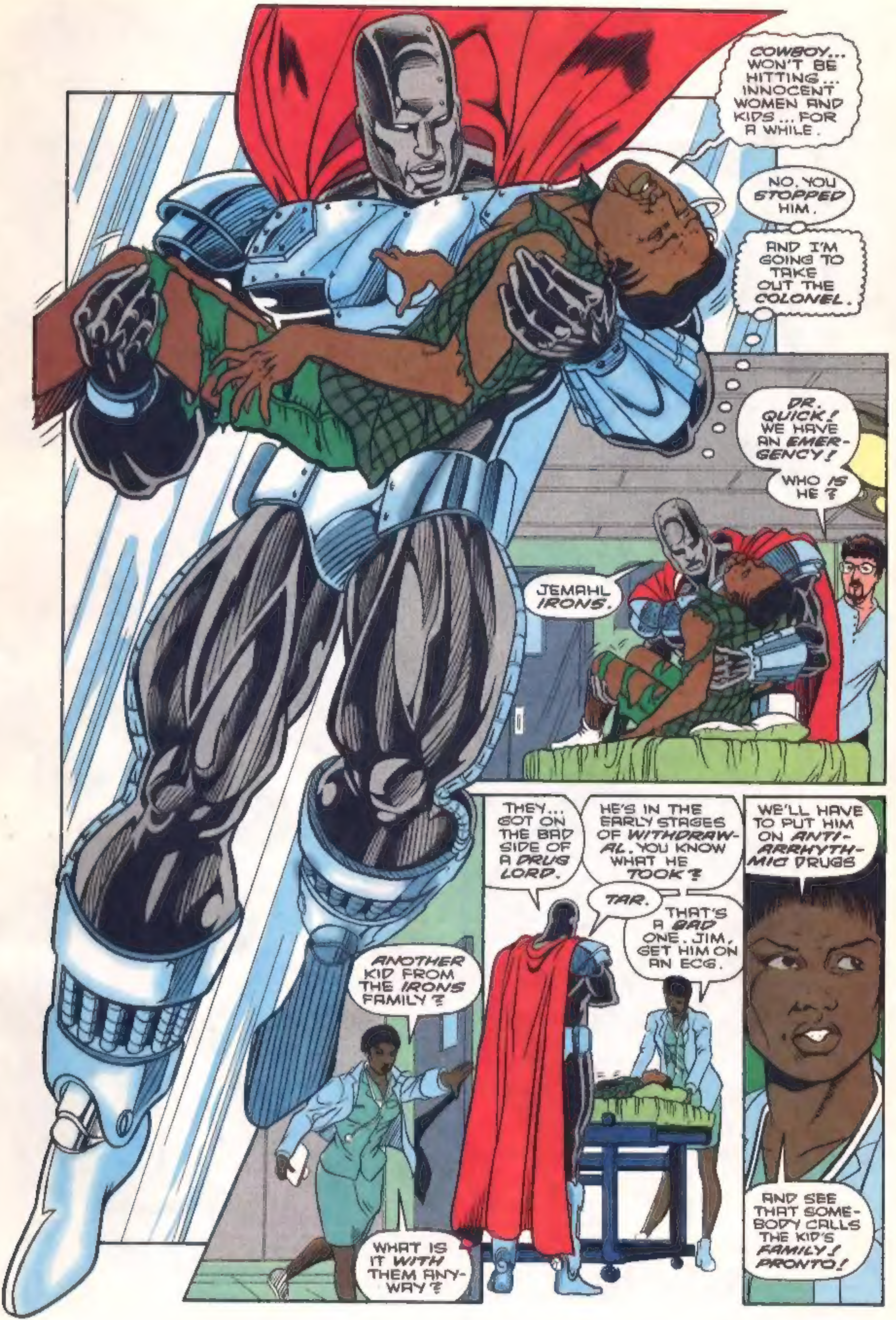
HEAVY
METAL!



BY L. SIMONSON,
BATISTA & FABER



BATISTA, FABER



COWBOY...
WON'T BE
HITTING...
INNOCENT
WOMEN AND
KIDS... FOR
A WHILE.

NO, YOU
STOPPED
HIM.

AND I'M
GOING TO
TAKE
OUT THE
COLONEL.

DR.
QUICK!
WE HAVE
AN EMER-
GENCY!

WHO IS
HE?

JEMAHL
IRONS.

THEY...
GOT ON
THE BAD
SIDE OF
A DRUG
LORD.

HE'S IN THE
EARLY STAGES
OF WITHDRAW-
AL. YOU KNOW
WHAT HE
TOOK?

WE'LL HAVE
TO PUT HIM
ON ANTI-
ARRHYTH-
MIC DRUGS

TAR.

THAT'S
A BAD
ONE. JIM,
GET HIM ON
AN ECG.

ANOTHER
KID FROM
THE IRONS
FAMILY?

WHAT IS
IT WITH
THEM ANY-
WAY?

AND SEE
THAT SOME-
BODY CALLS
THE KID'S
FAMILY!
PRONTO!



COLONEL ORDERED MY FAMILY HIT... ONE BY ONE...

...TO GET TO ME... TO BREAK ME.

BUT I'M NOT THE ONE WHO'S GONNA BE BROKEN.

I DIDN'T LET JEM KILL COWBOY.

BUT THE COLONEL IS GOING TO DIE FOR WHAT HE'S DONE!



IT'S STEEL, COLONEL WESTON! HE'S BACK!

GOOD! YOU SOLDIERS KNOW WHAT TO DO--



"--KILL HIM!"

GOOD! WE BEEN WRITIN' FOR A RE-MATCH!



HEY, BIG BIRD!

WE JUST TIED A TIN CAN TO YER TAIL! AMF!



COLLISON COURSE

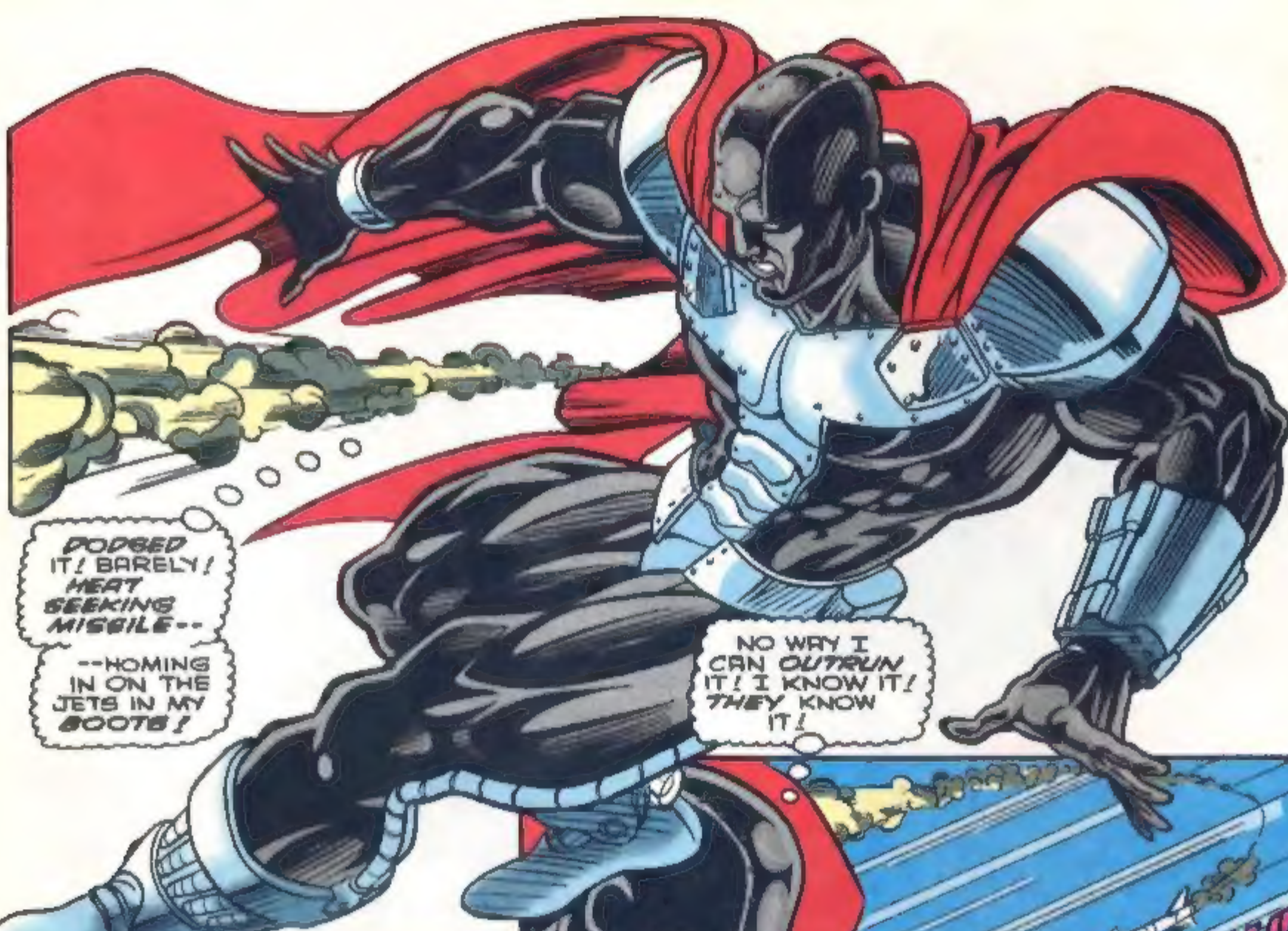
THROOMB!

WRITER: LOUISE SIMONSON
PENCILLER: CHRIS BATISTA
INKER: RICH FABER
LETTERER: PAT BROSSAU
COLORIST: GINA GOING
EDITOR: FRANK PITTARESE

STEEL CREATED BY LOUISE SIMONSON AND JON BOGDANOVE

STEEL 6, July, 1994. Published monthly by DC Comics, 1325 Avenue of the Americas, New York, NY 10019. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to STEEL, DC Comics Subscriptions, P.O. Box 0526, Baldwin, NY 11510. Annual subscription rate \$16.00. Canadian subscribers must add \$8.00 for postage and GST. U.S. funds only. Copyright © 1994 DC Comics. All Rights Reserved. All characters featured in this issue, the distinctive likenesses thereof, and all related indicia are trademarks of DC Comics. The stories, characters and incidents mentioned in this magazine are entirely fictional. For advertising space contact: Tom Ballou, (212) 636-5520. Printed on recyclable paper. Printed in Canada. DC Comics. A division of Warner Bros.—A Time Warner Entertainment Company

nom deplume scan



DODGED IT! BARELY! HEAT SEEKING MISSILE--

--HOMING IN ON THE JETS IN MY BOOTS!

NO WAY I CAN OUTRUN IT! I KNOW IT! THEY KNOW IT!

FWOOSH!

MAKES IT REALLY EASY TO GET WESTON'S BOONS OFF MY BACK!

DIVE STRAIGHT AT THEM!

IN-COMING!

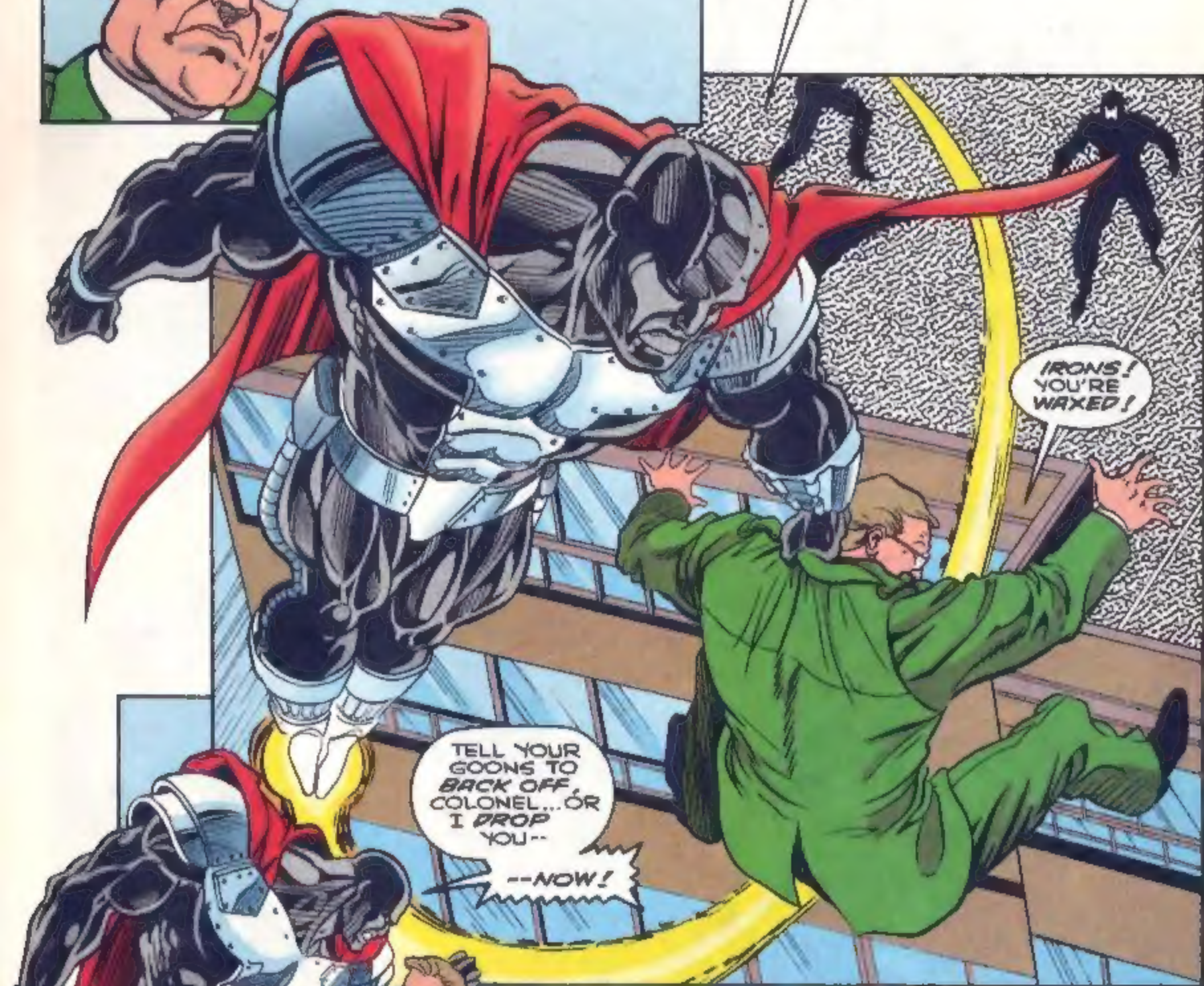
RUN!

IRONS HAS MORE LIVES THAN A FLAMIN' CAT! WHERE HAS HE GONE...?

FLY SO LOW MY BELLY'S DRAGGIN' IN THE DIRT...

...AND HOPE THE MISSILE FOLLOWS REAL CLOSE!

KA-THOOM!





IT'S THE COPS!

PUT YOUR HANDS IN THE AIR! YOU ARE UNDER ARREST!



STEEL! DON'T!

I HAVE A WARRANT HERE FOR COLONEL WESTON'S ARREST.



HE'S BEEN POURING DRUGS AND GUNS INTO THE DEECIE HOOPS.

HE DESERVED TO DIE.

HE ORDERED HITS ON INNOCENT WOMEN AND KIDS.

THAT'S FOR THE LAW TO DECIDE.



BRING HIM DOWN, STEEL.

IF YOU'RE ONE OF THE GOOD GUYS, THEN BRING HIM DOWN.




A BILLION DOLLAR CORPORATION LIKE AMER-TEK DOESN'T NEED TO SELL ARMS AND DRUGS TO GHETTO KIDS.

WHAT'S REALLY GOING ON?

I DON'T KNOW WHAT YOU'RE TALKING ABOUT.





THE *MOBSNECK BRIDGE* / HALF COLLAPSED DURING A FIGHT BETWEEN SUPERBOY AND THE STINGER!

A BRIDGE THAT LEADS TO NOWHERE!

THAT'S OLD NEWS! BUT THIS...!

THE *DAILY PLANET* IS DOWN! *LEXCORP* IS RUBBLE / ALL OF THE MAJOR SKY-SCRAPERS ...

... ONLY THE *NEWSTIME* BUILDING IS TOTALLY IN-TACT.

I KNEW THERE'D BEEN FIGHTING IN METROPOLIS... I SAW THE NEWS REPORTS LIKE EVERYONE ELSE!

THE COLONEL SAYS *BLACK OPS* OPERATES FROM METROPOLIS.

SHAUNA BERYL CONFIRMED IT, BUT SHE KNEW NOTHING ABOUT THEM BUT THE *RUMORS*.

AND THE RUMORS WERE *BAD*.

I WONDER HOW THEY SURVIVED THIS DEBACLE.

I HOPE THERE'S ENOUGH OF THEM LEFT ...

EVEN SO, I NEVER IMAGINED IT WOULD BE THIS BAD.

"...FOR ME
TO TAKE
APART."

SO IT WASN'T ENOUGH
TO DESTROY MY
AMERTEK OPERATION!
STEEL HAS COME TO
METROPOLIS!

HAZARD?

WHAT
IS IT,
SPENCER?

THERE'S A
SCIENTIST
THERE
NAMED
ALVA,
SIR.

HE'S USING BENTSON
TO SEND SUPER-
POWERED **BEINGS**
HERE ... POSSIBLY
BENT ON **INVASION**.

IT'S ALL
IN ... IN
THERE,
SIR.

IT'S ABOUT THE
POSTAL WORKER
WHO REPORTED TO
OUR **STRESS CLINIC**.

I'LL
READ IT.
IN THE
MEANTIME,
IMPLANT A
TRACER IN
BENTSON!

IF HE'S
EVERYTHING
YOU SAY HE
IS, I DON'T
WANT TO
LOSE
HIM!

STEEL
HAS COME
HERE LOOK-
ING FOR US,
**SHELL-
SHOCK!**

KEEP AN
EYE ON HIM!
IF HE GETS
TOO CLOSE,
WE'LL HAVE
TO **DESTROY**
HIM.

HE'S
SHOWING
SIGNS OF
**META-
POWERS?**

NOT...
EXACTLY.

AT FIRST WE
THOUGHT THAT
HE WAS SIMPLY
HAVING VIVID
DREAMS.

BUT NOW...
WE THINK
HE'S A **LIVING**
PORTAL TO ANOTHER
UNIVERSE.



IT'S HIM!

WHAT A PLEASANT SURPRISE, MR. CABRAL! WHAT CAN WE DO FOR YOU?

MANUEL CABRAL! THE HEAD OF RAINFOREST TECHNOLOGIES!

THE PHILANTHROPIST WHO PROVIDES OUR FUNDING!

THE BENTSON CASE INTERESTS ME, DR. WEST.

I BELIEVE THAT IT IS MUCH TOO... COMPLEX FOR YOU TO DEAL WITH...

IT'S SETTLED THEN. WE'LL HAVE HIM TRANSFERRED IMMEDIATELY.

I'M PLEASED WITH THE FINE JOB YOU SCIENTISTS HAVE BEEN DOING...

...HELPING THE DESPERATE AND HIGHLY STRESSED PEOPLE OF METROPOLIS.

WE ARE A BIT OVERWORKED, SIR, BUT--

...OVERWORKED AS YOU ALL ARE, HERE.

I'D LIKE TO HAVE HIM TRANSFERRED TO MY OWN SOPHISTICATED RESEARCH LAB.

I'LL SEE THAT YOU RECEIVE ANOTHER QUARTER-MILLION DOLLARS TO HELP KEEP THE CLINIC OPEN!

LOOK AT BENTSON! HE'S SOLIDIFYING...

HE'S
BACK!

AND HE'S BROUGHT
BEINGS FROM THE
OTHER UNIVERSE BACK
WITH HIM! AND SUPER-
BOY!

NO. I
DIDN'T MEAN
FOR US
TO COME
HERE!

YEAH?
WHERE
ARE
WE ANY-
WAY?

DON'T ASK
ME, SUPERBOY!
I NEVER SAW
THIS PLACE BE-
FORE IN MY LIFE!

UH-OH!
FEEL THAT
TINGLE OF
ENERGY?

THAT
MEANS WE'RE
LEAVING!

STOP
THEM!

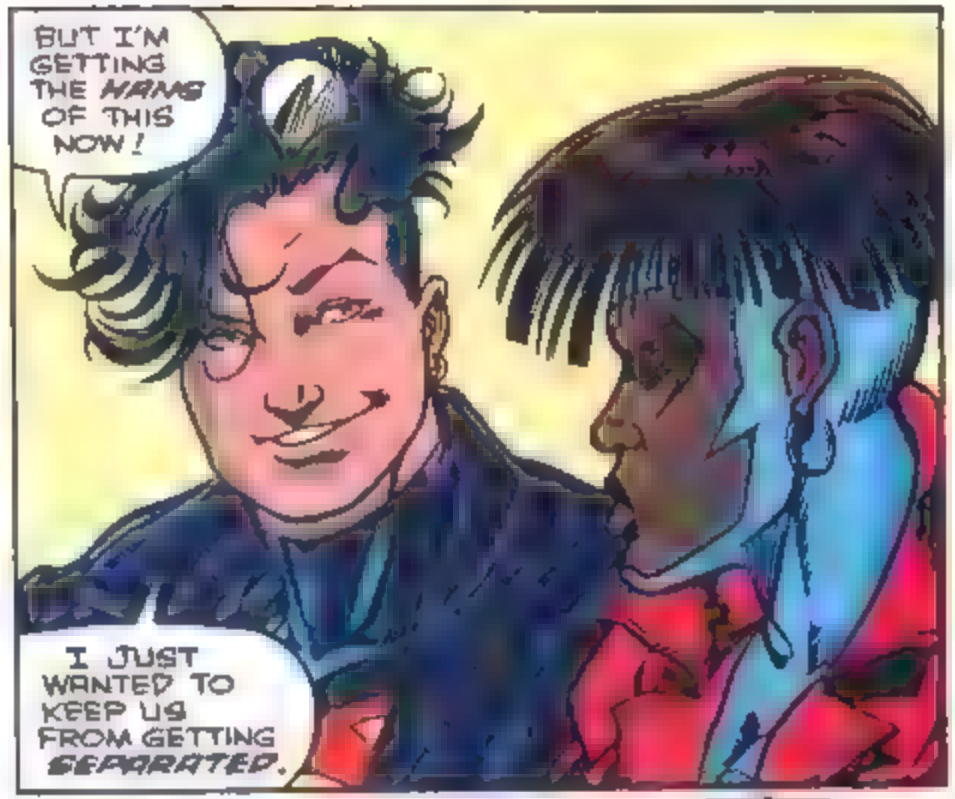


WHERE ARE WE NOW?

METROPOLIS.
557 ANDERSON STREET.

I FORGOT METROPOLIS WAS LIKE THIS NOW. I JUST WANTED TO GO HOME.

YOU THOUGHT I WAS GETTING FRESH, DIDN'T YOU, ROCKET?



BUT I'M GETTING THE HANGS OF THIS NOW!

I JUST WANTED TO KEEP US FROM GETTING SEPARATED.



METROPOLIS! I DON'T THINK I LIKE THIS PLACE.

WHO WERE THOSE PEOPLE BACK THERE?

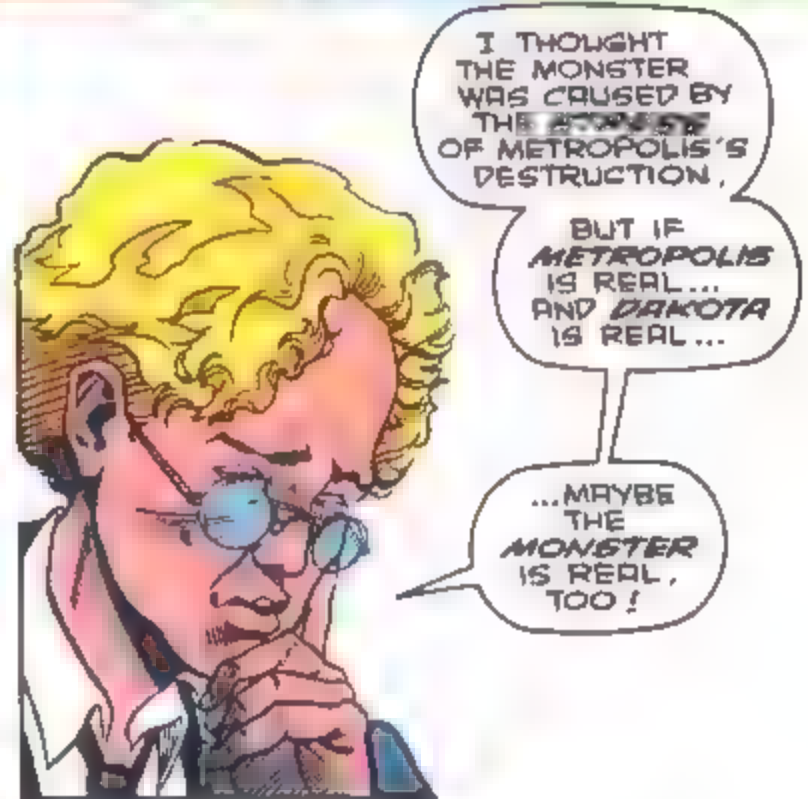
SCIENTISTS, HARDWARE I WENT TO A STRESS CLINIC HERE

I WAS HAVING MY USUAL DREAMS ABOUT DAKOTA...

.. BUT A MONSTER BEGAN APPEARING IN BETWEEN HERE AND THERE.



YEAH? THEN WHY DIDN'T YOU GRAB HARDWARE'S HAND?



I THOUGHT THE MONSTER WAS CAUSED BY THE ~~ATTACK~~ OF METROPOLIS'S DESTRUCTION.

BUT IF METROPOLIS IS REAL... AND DAKOTA IS REAL...

...MAYBE THE MONSTER IS REAL, TOO!

THINK ABOUT IT, MR. BENTSON. YOU CAN'T REALLY BELIEVE METROPOLIS IS REAL.

YOU'RE DREAMING METROPOLIS... AND SOMEHOW, YOU DREAMED US INTO IT!

HEY! I'M FROM METROPOLIS SO WHAT DOES THAT MAKE ME?



A FIGMENT OF HIS IMAGINATION.

YOU'RE OUT, ROCKET! HE MIGHT'VE IMAGINED A LUSCIOUS BABE LIKE YOU...

...BUT HE SURE WOULDN'T BOTHER TO IMAGINE ME!

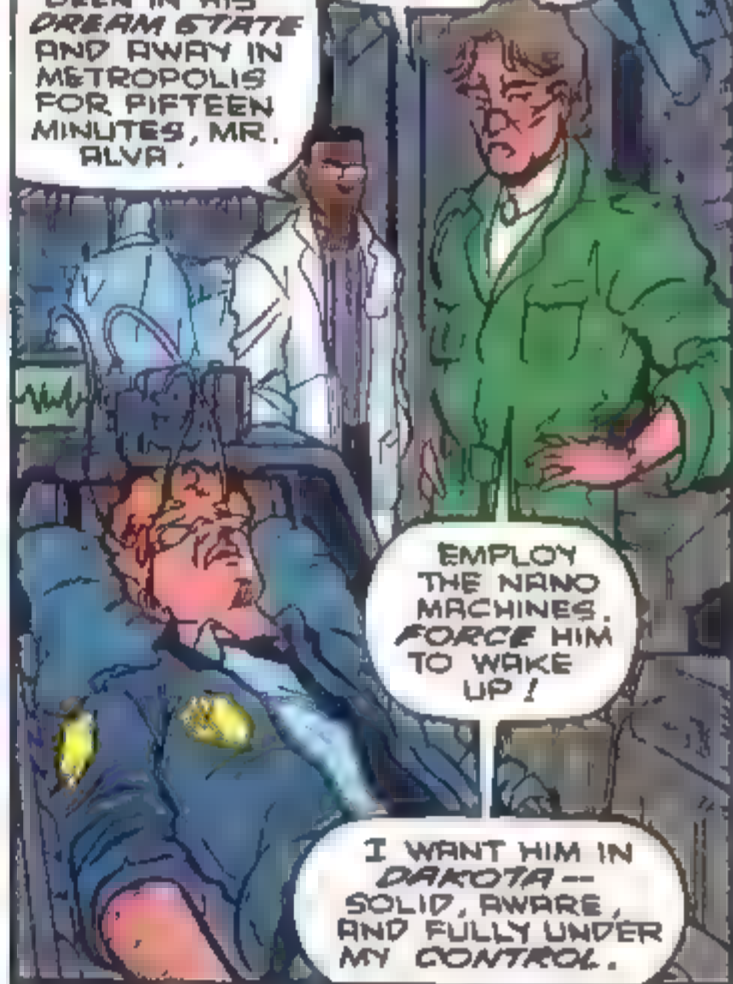


I HAVE HIM, HAZARD! ANDERSON STREET IN HOBS BAY.



BENTSON HAS BEEN IN HIS DREAM STATE AND AWAY IN METROPOLIS FOR FIFTEEN MINUTES, MR. ALVA.

EXCELLENT.



EMPLOY THE NANO MACHINES. FORCE HIM TO WAKE UP!

I WANT HIM IN DAKOTA -- SOLID, AWARE, AND FULLY UNDER MY CONTROL.

HE'S RADING!
MR. BENTSON!
WAIT!

TAKE IT
LIGHT,
HARDWARE!
ALL I HAVE
TO DO IS
TOUCH
THE THING.

INCOMING!
TEN TO ONE,
THOSE GOONS
ARE HERE TO
RETRIEVE
BENTSON!

THAT'S A
NEURAL
DISRUPTOR
NET--SIMILAR
TO MY OWN!
EVADE IT!

NO!

SNAP!

...AND--
TELEKINET-
ICALLY
SPEAKING--
IT'S A
TANGLE
OF BROKEN
WIRES!

SNAP!

STAY SOLID,
BENTSON,
AND HANG IN
THERE!

HELP!

Jet pack:
Deployed.

YOU TWO
HELP
BENTSON!

I'LL
DISABLE
THE
FLYING
GOONS!

BLAM!

NINE
BLOCKS
AWAY...

DIDN'T COME
HERE TO ACT AS
PART OF A RESCUE
SQUAD, BUT THE
PEOPLE OF METROPOLIS
NEED MY HELP!

LOCATIONS
SHAUNA GAVE
ME HAVE BEEN
DESTROYED ANY-
WAY!

Omnit-cannon!
Deployed.

BLACK
OPS WILL
JUST HAVE
TO WAIT
UNTIL--

WE'VE
GOT
HER, STEEL!
THANKS!

BLAM!

GUN-
FIRE!

WHAT'S
GOING ON
HERE?

YOU'RE THE
MAN FROM THE
VISION I HAD
WHEN BENTSON
BROUGHT ME
HERE EARLIER.

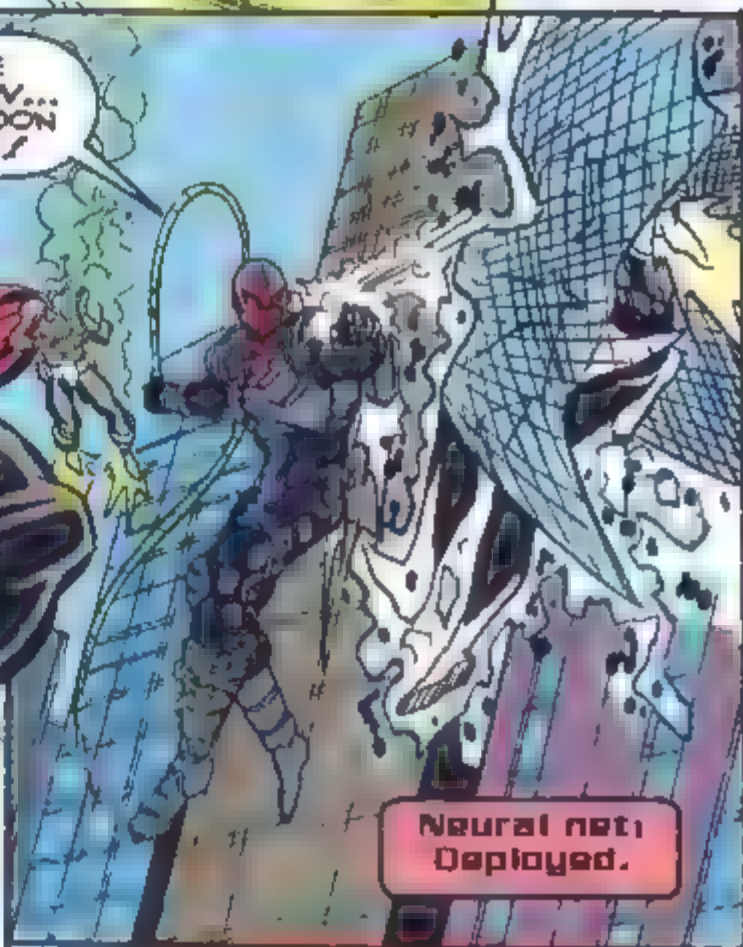
FELT THEN
LIKE YOU WERE
MY OPPOSITE
NUMBER...

...AND
HERE YOU ARE--
JUST ANOTHER
PUNK FOR
HIRE!

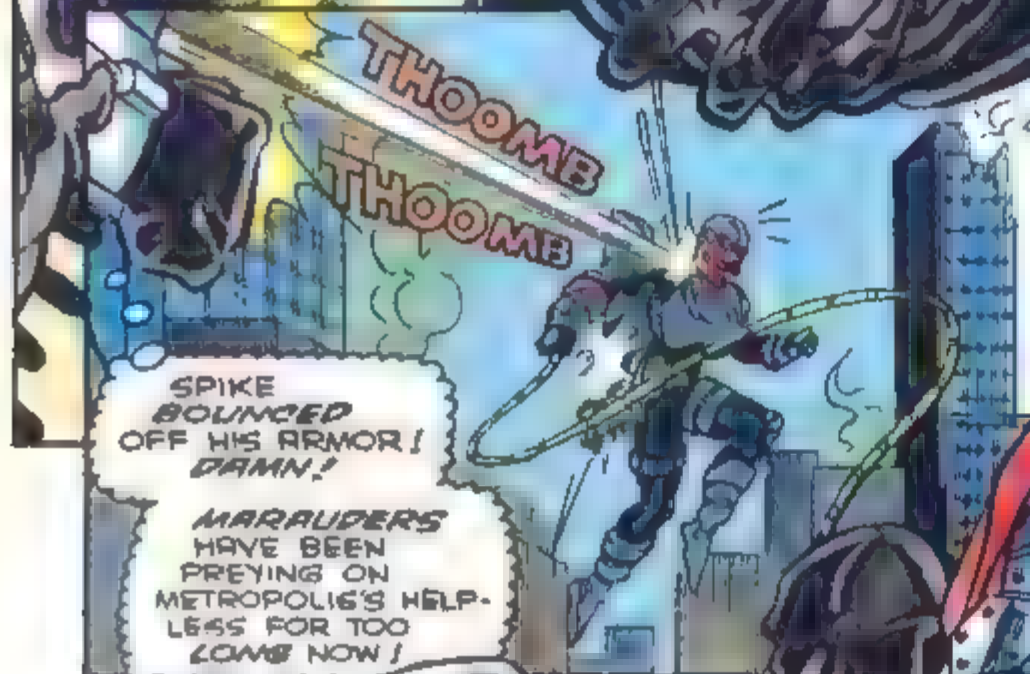


WUNPH! /
HURT!
WHO IS
THIS GUY?

ONE
DOWN...
ONE GOON
TO GO!

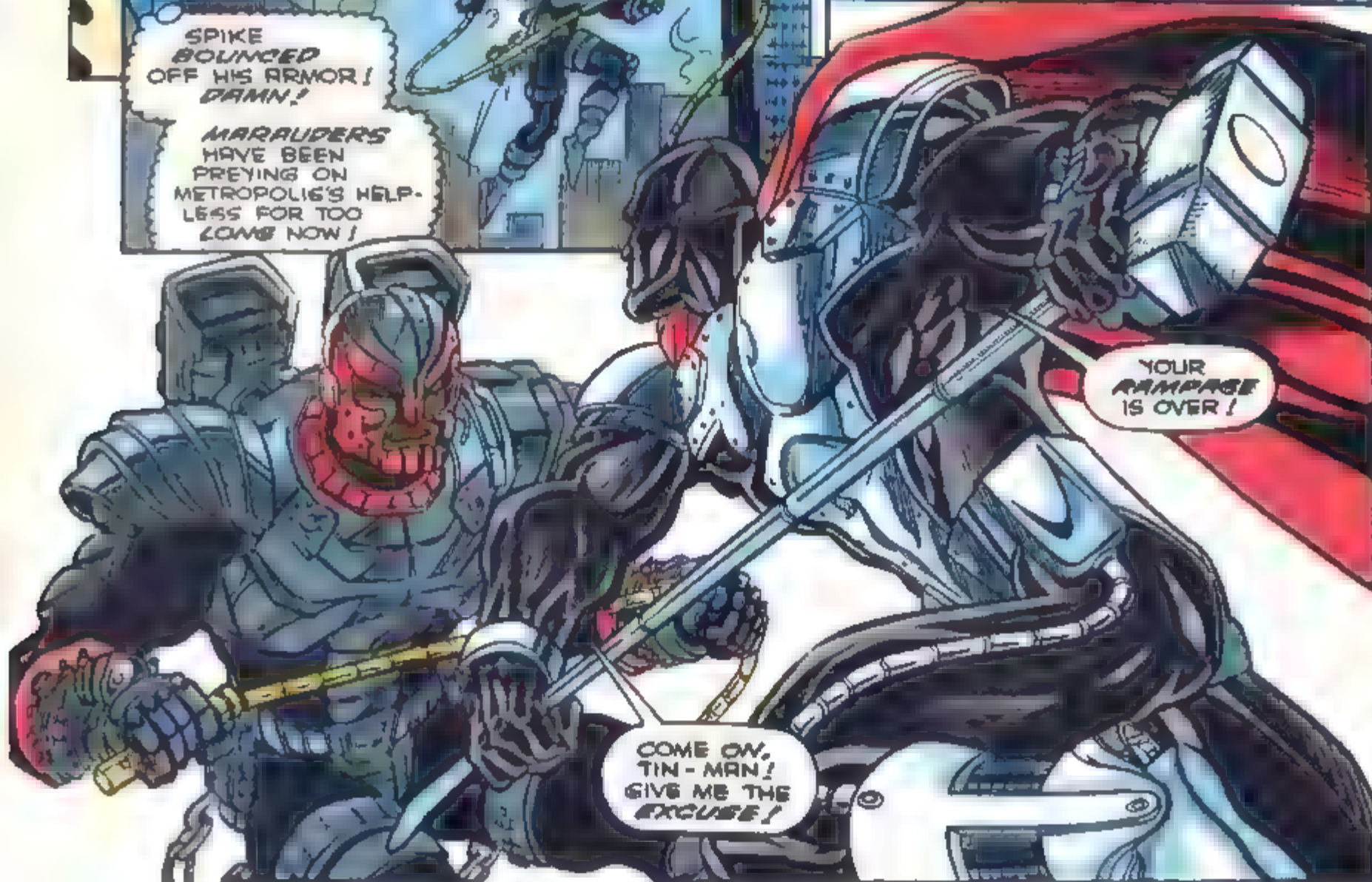


Neural net:
Deployed.



SPIKE
BOUNCED
OFF HIS ARMOR!
DAMN!

MARAUDERS
HAVE BEEN
PREYING ON
METROPOLIS'S HELP-
LESS FOR TOO
LONG NOW!



YOUR
RAMPAGE
IS OVER!

COME ON,
TIN-MAN!
GIVE ME THE
EXCUSE!

"BENTSON IS FIGHTING US. MR. ALVA IF HE KEEPS THIS UP, HE'LL KILL HIMSELF!"

SMART THING WOULD BE TO FLY MR. BENTSON OUT OF HERE!

WE CAN'T! HE KEEPS FLICKERING IN AND OUT. WE'D DROP HIM!

WAAHKT!

AT LEAST **HARDWARE** HAS HIS CONFLICT UNDER CONTROL!

THERE'S OBVIOUSLY A MISUNDERSTANDING!

HOW ABOUT I PROTECT BENTSON WHILE YOU FLY UP AND STOP THEM.

HEY, WAIT A MINUTE! THAT'S **STEEL** HE'S FIGHTING! **STEEL'S MY FRIEND!**

THEY'RE BOTH GOOD GUYS?

YOU GOT IT!

HEY, **HARDWARE!** **STEEL!** **GUYS!!**

THEY'RE NOT LISTENING!



I'D PREFER TO KEEP BENTSON CONSCIOUS...

...BUT WE'LL JUST HAVE TO WAKE HIM UP LATER.

LAUNCH THE GAS GRENADE!

POOM!

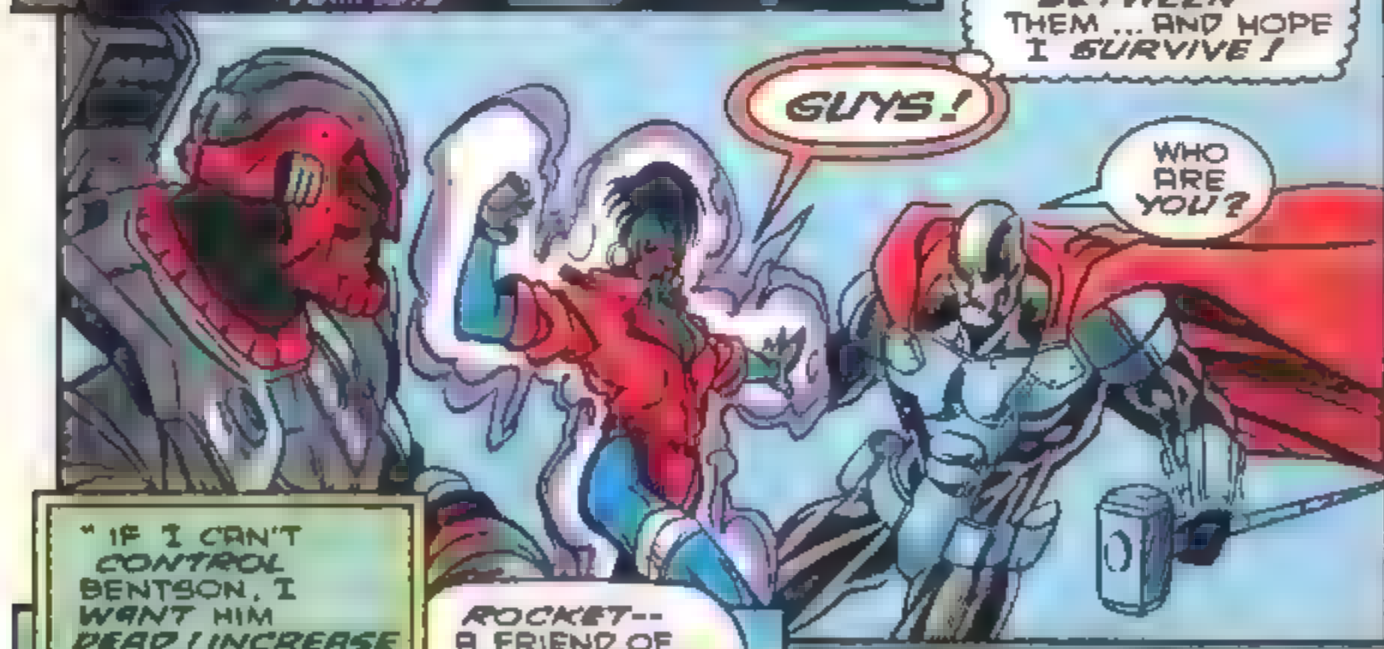


GAS I CAN'T... MANIPULATE IT... TELEKINETICALLY! CAN'T ...

KID'S STAGGERING ...ALMOST DOWN!

TROUBLE BELOW! WHAT'LL I DO NOW?

THROW MYSELF BETWEEN THEM ... AND HOPE I SURVIVE!



GUYS!

WHO ARE YOU?

"IF I CAN'T CONTROL BENTSON, I WANT HIM DEAD! INCREASE THE DOSAGE! NOW!"

ROCKET-- A FRIEND OF SUPERBOY'S! YOU SHOULDN'T BE FIGHTING EACH OTHER!

THE BAD GUYS ARE DOWN BELOW--

UH OH! HARDWARE, I THINK THAT TINGLE MEANS WE'RE HEADING BACK TO DAKOTA!

THEY'RE FADING AWAY! BUT WHERE'S DAKOTA?

BENTSON'S FLICKERING, BUT THE CLAMPS SHOULD HOLD HIM HERE PHYSICALLY.

BOSS'LL KILL US IF WE LOSE HIM!

SUPERBOY'S DISAPPEARING!

HEY, SPIT! 'PORT US TO HAZARD'S METRO-LAB! PRONTO!

YOU WANT
IT, YOU GOT
IT! YOU'RE
GONE!

THEY
TELEPORTED
AWAY!?!?

STEEL!
GLAD TO SEE
YOU BACK IN
METROPOLIS!

WITH THE CITY
IN TURMOIL,
WE CAN USE
ALL THE HELP
WE CAN GET.

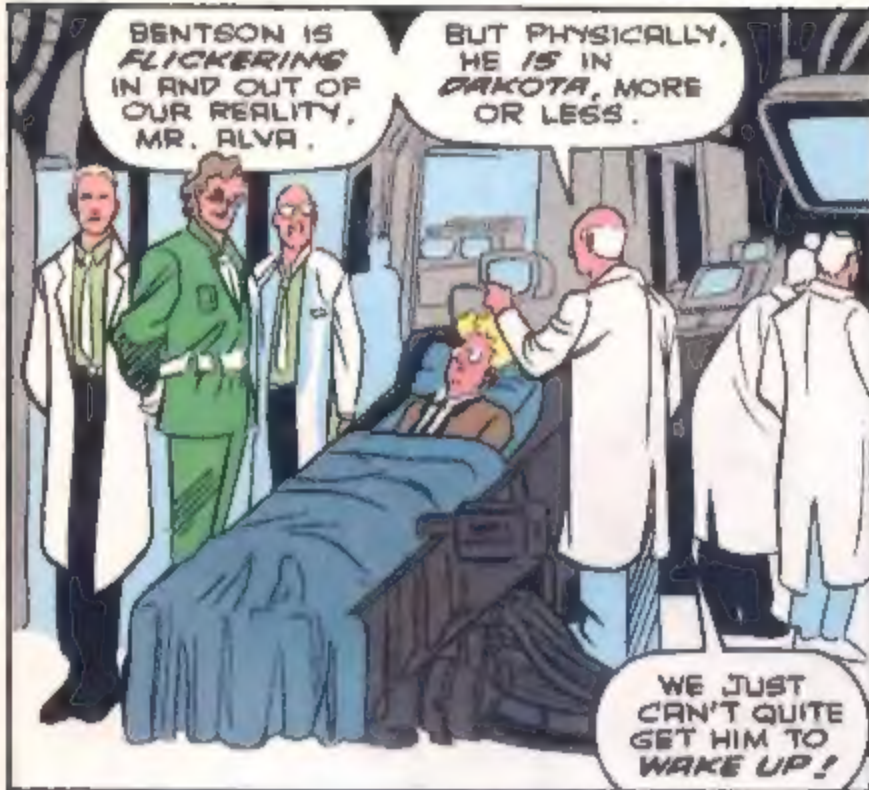
THERE
MAY BE MORE
TROUBLE THAN
YOU'RE
PRESENTLY
AWARE OF,
SUPERMAN!

A PITCHED
BATTLE WAS
JUST FOUGHT
HERE

EXCEPT FOR
ME, THE
COMBATANTS,
INCLUDING
SUPERBOY,
HAVE SIMPLY
DISAPPEARED.

SOME, I
THINK, WERE
TELEPORTED
AWAY, BUT THE
OTHERS...!

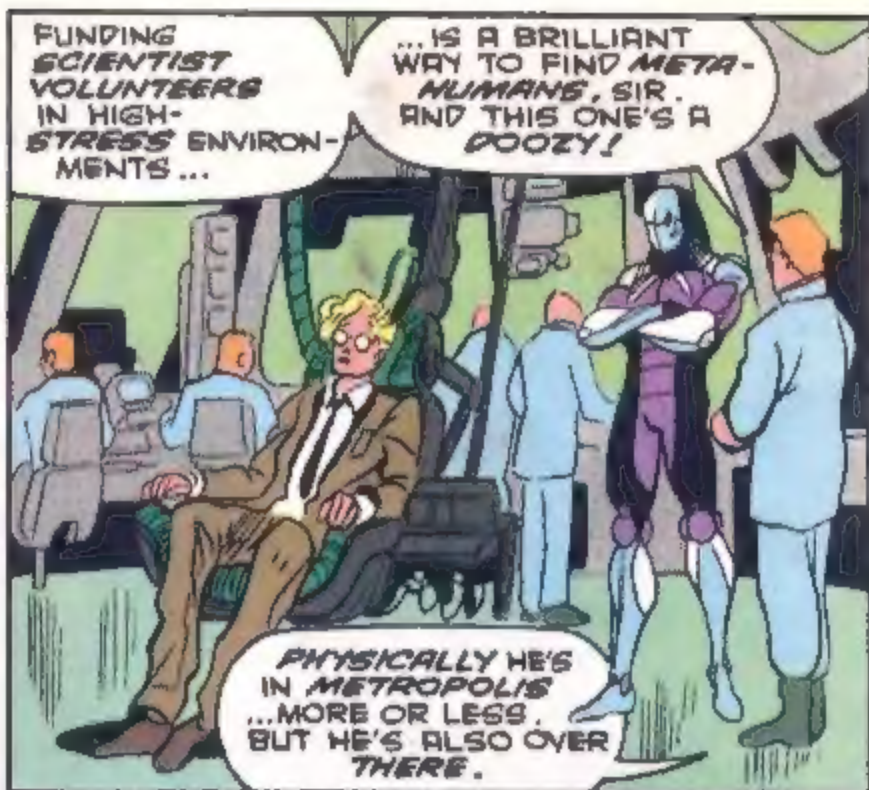
FUNNY
THING WAS,
THE SCRAP SEEMED
TO BE OVER POS-
SESSION OF A
MAILMAN!



BENTSON IS FLICKERING IN AND OUT OF OUR REALITY, MR. ALVA.

BUT PHYSICALLY, HE IS IN DAKOTA, MORE OR LESS.

WE JUST CAN'T QUITE GET HIM TO WAKE UP!



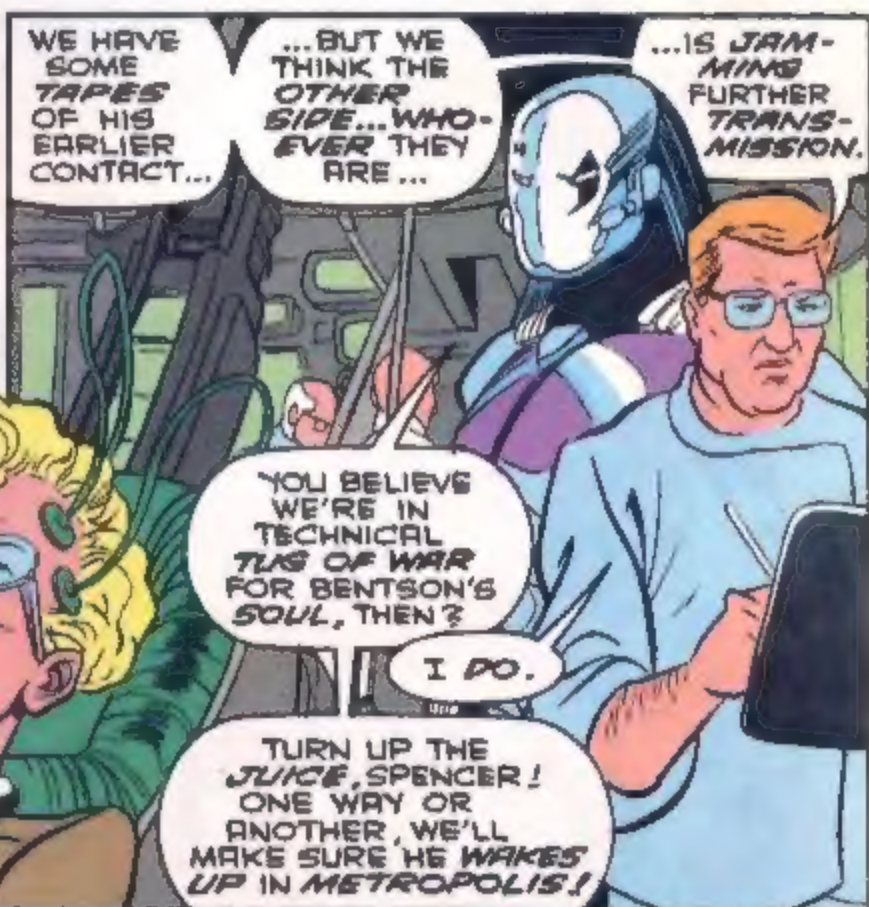
FUNDING SCIENTIST VOLUNTEERS IN HIGH-STRESS ENVIRONMENTS ...

... IS A BRILLIANT WAY TO FIND META-HUMANS, SIR. AND THIS ONE'S A DOOZY!

PHYSICALLY HE'S IN METROPOLIS ... MORE OR LESS. BUT HE'S ALSO OVER THERE.



SO WE TURN UP THE POWER. ONE WAY OR ANOTHER, HE WILL WAKE UP!



WE HAVE SOME TAPES OF HIS EARLIER CONTACT ...

... BUT WE THINK THE OTHER SIDE ... WHO-EVER THEY ARE ...

... IS JAMMING FURTHER TRANSMISSION.

YOU BELIEVE WE'RE IN TECHNICAL TUG OF WAR FOR BENTSON'S SOUL, THEN?

I DO.

TURN UP THE JUICE, SPENCER! ONE WAY OR ANOTHER, WE'LL MAKE SURE HE WAKES UP IN METROPOLIS!



AAAAAA!

AAAAAA

HE'S AWAKE! WE'VE GOT HIM!

HE'S AWAKE! WE'VE GOT HIM! WE'VE WON!

KRAKATHOOOOMB RUMBLE!!

RUMBLETHOOMB

WHAT'S THAT? AN EXPLOSION...? AN EARTH-QUAKE?

WHATEVER IT WAS, IT SOUNDED LIKE THE GATES OF HELL BLEW OPEN!

THE HOBBSNECK BRIDGE!

WHAT'S THAT ROILING IN THE AIR AROUND IT? DUST? OR MIST?

WHATEVER IT IS, IT'S SO DENSE MY X-RAY VISION CAN BARELY PENETRATE IT.

I CAN MAKE OUT THE SHADOWS OF OTHER PYLONS!

IT LOOKS LIKE THE BRIDGE HAS BEEN RE-STORED--

--WITH DIFFERENT ARCHITECTURE LEADING AWAY FROM METROPOLIS AND INTO THE MIST!

I CAN'T SEE WHAT'S ON THE OTHER SIDE.

A BRIDGE RESTORED! THAT SHOULD BE GOOD NEWS... RIGHT?

SO WHY DO I HAVE THE FEELING THINGS ARE GONNA GET BAD REAL FAST?!

CONTINUED IN
BLOOD SYNDICATE
16!
ON SALE **NOW!**

JENETTE KAHN, President & Editor-in-Chief
PAUL LEVITZ, Executive VP & Publisher
FRANK PITTARESE, Editor
JOE ORLANDO, VP-Creative Director
TOM BALLOU, VP-Advertising
BRUCE BRISTOW, VP-Sales & Marketing
PATRICK CALDON, VP-Finance & Operations
TERRI CUNNINGHAM, Managing Editor
CHANTAL D'AULNIS, VP-Business Affairs
LILLIAN LASERSON, VP & General Counsel
SEYMOUR MILES, VP-Associate Publisher
BOB ROZAKIS, Executive Director-Production

STEEL

PREVIOUSLY IN STEEL: The Irons family has been subject to one tragedy after another: a shooting, a mugging, a hit-and-run "accident." Seeking revenge, young Jemahl Irons took the deadly TAR drug, but was forced to do battle with his uncle, Steel. Now, Steel has seen enough. He's putting an end to violence once and for all...even if it means killing the Colonel in cold blood.

Meanwhile, in Metropolis, a man named Fred Bentson has checked himself into a dream clinic. It seems that Fred has been having nightmares about a place called Dakota...but these nightmares are all too real, and through Fred, Steel will soon find himself in the midst of a battle to save two worlds...

Hail, Metalheads!

This is it, this is it, THIS IS IT! Finally, the perfect comic book. An inexperienced super-hero fighting in the 'hood. Perfect! Exquisite art by Chris Batista and a good, solid story by Jon Bogdanove and Louise Simonson. One thing's missing, however: a fly honey (that's "babe" for the dialect impaired). Maybe she could really work for Amertek, pretend she's falling in love with John Henry, betray him but really like him, save him, and you can write the rest from there!

Jason Jeffers
St. James, Barbados

What's left to write, Jase? You've pretty much summed up a whole storyline right there! Anyway, we'll see what we can do about getting a "fly honey" into John's life...but maybe not one as wicked as you've described. Thanks for writing!

Dear Steel-workers:

I must admit that I was skeptical about the idea of a STEEL ongoing series. The "Reign of the Supermen" was a great arc, but I never really felt like I would need to put out \$1.50 a month for any of them once it was over. Nevertheless, I usually pick up a first issue just for its speculative value, which I did with STEEL. But, upon seeing the names on the cover, I was disappointed that Bog wasn't doing the art.

That is, until I saw the insides.

The art was great! No, incredible! I mean, this was work that Neal Adams or George Pérez should be proud of. I was really impressed. And if you can

believe it, I was more impressed by the coloring than I was by the pencils and inks. The airbrushing made the fabrics and skin tones much more believable. Way to go, Ginal!

Skin coloring in comics, for so long, has been a brown blot, a pink blot, or a yellow blot. The way the African-American skin is colored is much more realistic than anyone has done with Caucasian tones. We poor white folk have all our veins and muscle fibers showing through our translucent skin. Gine's use of tones and colors is much more attractive than the typical black-inked shadows. I especially enjoyed the fire-light in the armor-forging scene.

I won't comment on the writing yet, because I don't think you can judge that after only one issue, but I have high hopes. As for the lettering, I must confess with brutal honesty that I can't really tell one letterer's work from another's; but I think that poor, awkward lettering would stick out like a sore thumb, and that certainly wasn't the case here. Good work!

Lastly, being a Baltimorean...I mean Baltimorean...I like the setting of the story, and I'd love to see Steel venture 35 miles northwest at least once during his run. I guess it's obvious that I'll be back for issue #2, although my wallet is screaming at me.

John A. Sigmon
Baltimore, MD

It's not screaming at you...it's screaming with you. As for Steel's visiting Baltimore, anything's possible, but he will expect you to take him out to lunch when he gets there!

Dear Steel Slingers,

Hah, oh boy, are you guys in trouble! I was looking in my *Overstreet Guide* and discovered something—there was another title called STEEL, specifically STEEL: THE INDESTRUCTIBLE MAN! Your geeses are cooked! Just wait until I send notice to...hold on...let me find it...DC Comics! You'll be coughing up the dough then, let me tell you! Of course, for a small fee (unmarked tens and twenties, no checks, please) I can be persuaded to "forget" said notice.

Ahem.

In a more serious light, I just can't rave enough about STEEL. John Henry Irons is one of the best characters to come along in a long time, all the more so by being a rarity in this

age of brutal, psychopathic butchers masquerading as heroes: a hero with morals, scruples, and a conscience who has actually become successful enough to get his own book. I can't argue that his ties to Superman's return helped in that regard, but in any case, it's always good to see a new character who doesn't measure his success in some "crusade of vengeance" by his body count. Steel is different. He doesn't really want to be a hero, but feels an intense responsibility to right the wrongs he has caused (directly and indirectly) in his own past, armed with his brains, the tools created by that brain, and a strength of character worthy of that other Man of Steel.

The only disappointment comes with the new, more streamlined Steel armor. The chest plate looks awfully bare. I can understand Steel's reasons for not wearing the S-shield, though, ironically, I only think it makes him more worthy of it.

Until Steel trades in his hammer for an electric toothbrush...

Fritz Baugh
Indianapolis, IN

Hey, how'd you find out about the electric toothbrush? There go our big storyline plans for the next six issues! Now what're we gonna do?

Seriously, though, a lot of thought (and I mean a lot of thought) went into deciding whether to put an S-shield on Steel. Ultimately, it seemed to be much more in character for John Henry to want to leave the S-shield off. In his eyes, there can only be one, true Superman. We hope that in the coming months, the new armor will grow on you as much as it will on John Henry.

As far as the original Steel is concerned...blackmail-schmack-mail...we remember him well and would like to think that he'd be proud of John Henry had he only known him.

Dear Sirs,

I have been following the rise of the "Supermen" and have been very impressed by the quality in which these new heroes have emerged. I think that one of the finest will be Steel, because he is not trying to fill someone's boots by taking over their name. In my opinion, he is a very fresh and feasible character, and I think he will make the grade.

There is one question that puzzles me as I read and reread the first issue and even the previous appearances of John Henry Irons. Regarding men's earrings, I was always brought up thinking that "left is right and right is wrong." My question is that I'm wondering if you are trying to tell us something about Hank's personal life, or is it that I'm just outdated in my thinking? It wasn't until I read the novel *The Death and Life of Superman* by Roger Stern that I came to understand Capt. Maggie Sawyer's sexual preference was other than the "traditional standards." Are we to assume the same for Dr. Irons? With his physique, I would not want to question him about his "manhood" face to face for fear that my face might be ripped off, so I thought I would question the people who might be responsible for this and hope that my face would remain intact. If you could, please clear up the misconceptions and my ignorance for me.

Thank you for the fine work!

Harlan J. Bryan
Springfield, MO

It's okay, Harlan, your face is safe. Several people have written in and asked the same question. You asked the most politely (thanks), so here goes...

I, too, grew up hearing that old "right is wrong and wrong is right" thing. (I'd like to think that "right" and "wrong" are being used in the most figurative sense possible). Anyway, if such a thing was ever true...if the placement of one's earring was ever an indication of a person's preference...I think that that stopped being a statement a long time ago. Nowadays, men (and women) wear earrings in one ear, or both; they have pierced noses, among other things. I wear two earrings in my left ear. What does that mean? Nothing, really, I just like the way it looks. As far as John Henry is concerned, I think this matters in comics as much as it does in the real world. Is he a good guy? Yes. Is he somebody you'd want to be friends with? Yeah, sure (as long as you don't mind getting hit by a car or shot at once in a while). Is he gay or straight? Doesn't really matter, does it?

Dear Frank,

I just want to thank you and the hosts of STEEL for a fabulous first issue. I usually wait for another three or four more issues before I really get into a comic and commit to purchasing it. But the entire staff of STEEL showed me that to do that would have been an unbearable mistake. The storyline was great from the very beginning.

I just want to say if Chris, Rich, Pat or Gina discontinues adding their dimension to STEEL, there will be some serious repercussions. The scenes on page 2 (John getting off

the bus), pages 6 and 7 (John battling the thugs), and page 22 (the man called Steel) were the essence of what I think good comic art should be. Hey, Chris...keep up the good work.

Finally, the cover art was fantastic (what more need I say?).

Until Steel turns in his hammer for one of Gramma Bese's frying pans, I'll be in the pages of STEEL!

Michael Johnson
Winston-Salem, NC

Oh, brother! First Fritz Baugh finds out about the electric toothbrush, and now you've found out about the new frying pan weapons!!! Can nothing stay secret around here?!

Anyway, thanks for the compliments.

Dear DC,

Issue #1 of STEEL was fantastic. Chris Batiata and Rich Faber did an excellent job of creating a realistic view of our nation's capital. Jon and Louise did their jobs almost too well. You see, I live within 20 minutes of Washington, D.C., and some of the scenes created in this book reminded me of some of the stories I've been told. There are guns in my own school (not anything near a Toastmaster, but scary in other ways).

Anyway, back to the book. The artwork was incredible, and I can't remember seeing anything like it before. Good job on creating new characters that I know will play major roles in the upcoming issues. Steel's new costume is great, and page 21 reminded me of an issue I read not long ago...something like MAN OF STEEL #22.

Keep up the great work!

Jeff Schwab
Clifton, VA

Thanks, Jeff. It's pretty sad that you have to go to a school where kids are walking around with guns. It's a scary thing, to be sure. When I was a kid the worst thing anybody ever did was chew gum in class, and now twelve-year-olds are shooting bullets at each other. Can't they all just relax and read a comic book?

Dear STEEL writers,

I guess you could call me a Marvel maniac. I have in my possession nearly a thousand comics. 95% are Marvel, 5% are DC. This is the first time, however, that I've written to a comic book.

I read STEEL #1 and I loved it. I have the entire collection of the death and return of Superman, which got me really interested in the man who would be "Steel."

I have faith in this comic and this character. Some things I'd like to point out, though: This character

and storyline remind me of a certain favorite Marvel character of mine, Iron Man.

Both Steel and Iron Man are the world's most knowledgeable expert on strength-enhancing superarmor. Both created the armor in the first place. Both have had their technology stolen by some evil individual(s). Both feel totally responsible for all the sorrow their technology has brought and both are determined to stop what has fallen into evil hands.

What I really like about Steel, as opposed to Iron Man, is that without his armor, John is still one hell of a tough guy. I'd really love to know how strong Steel actually is. Seeing how much "butt" he can kick and how much punishment he can take, I don't think Iron Man would want to mess with him. And speaking of Iron Man, other qualities of his that Steel has are his resourcefulness and quick thinking.

Anyway, wicked work, you guys! Keep up the good work!

Tony Stark
address withheld by request

Who, exactly, is this "Iron Man"?

Seriously, though, Mr. (ahem) Stark, the comparisons between Steel and Iron Man, at least early on, were to be expected. But the bottom line is, they're both guys in armor. So is Hardware. So is War Machine. So is Rocket Red. What makes all of these heroes vastly different is who they are out of the armor...and what makes them put it on in the first place. I think that, based upon what you'll be seeing in the coming months, you'll agree 100% that Steel and Iron Man are nothing alike! Stay tuned!

NEXT UP: "Worlds Collide" continues as Superman encounters a dangerous group of Dakote Bang-Babies from the other side of the bridge. Will the Blood Syndicate finish the job that Lex Luthor started? Will Superman be defeated by these strange visitors from another world? Check out BLOOD SYNDICATE #16, on sale now, for the butt-kickin' battle.

WORLDS COLLIDE: THE CHECKLIST

- Chapter 1: MAN OF STEEL #35
- Chapter 2: HARDWARE #17
- Chapter 3: SUPERBOY #6
- Chapter 4: ICON #15
- Chapter 5: STEEL #8
- Chapter 6: BLOOD SYNDICATE #16
- Chapter 7: WORLDS COLLIDE #1
- Chapter 8: SUPERBOY #7
- Chapter 9: HARDWARE #18
- Chapter 10: MAN OF STEEL #36
- Chapter 11: ICON #16
- Chapter 12: STEEL #7
- Chapter 13: BLOOD SYNDICATE #17
- Chapter 14: STATIC #14